

Dream
of
Courage



FACING FEAR HEAD ON

PAUL RUSHWORTH-BROWN

PROLOGUE

The echoes of battle still reverberated through the blood-soaked fields of England. A kingdom once united under the rule of monarchs now lay shattered, torn asunder by the tempestuous winds of revolution and the thirst for power. King Charles, a man consumed by his own desires, had sown the seeds of his own downfall, attempting to wield authority without bounds. His ambition had become the catalyst for a cataclysmic upheaval that would forever change the fate of the land.

As the sun dipped beneath the horizon, casting an ominous hue across the skyline, the axe's blade fell with a resounding finality. King Charles, the embodiment of absolute authority, met his end on the executioner's block, his dreams of dominion and dominance extinguished by the swift stroke of justice. England's trampled liberties and forgotten rights found a voice in the grim chorus of the condemned, and a new era was born.

From the ashes of monarchy emerged a republic, with Oliver Cromwell at its helm. His iron fist gripped the reins of power, his vision of a new order taking root. The halls of Parliament echoed with the voices of the people, their newfound authority shaping a nation no longer shackled by the whims of a single ruler. Yet, even

as the republic unfurled its banner, the spectre of the past loomed large.

Across the sea, in the grand courts of France, an exiled heir watched as his father's fate unfolded. Charles II, the rightful successor to the English throne, treaded a perilous path. Fear etched lines upon his brow, for he knew that returning to his homeland could lead to the same gruesome destiny that had befallen his sire. The allure of power was overshadowed by the dread of retribution.

In the heart of England, amidst the whispers of change and the clamour of conflicting loyalties, a fragile equilibrium danced upon a knife's edge. The Parliamentarians held dominion over a realm still haunted by divided allegiances. Royalist sympathisers, their fervour hidden beneath veils of caution, yearned for the resurgence of the crown. Their secrets, like precious gems, were hidden in the recesses of their souls, lest the pendulum of power swing once more.

The battlefields may have fallen silent, yet the war's harrowing aftermath painted a gruesome tableau. A nation scarred and fractured, its political, social and economic foundations razed to the ground. The rivers of England flowed not only with water but also with the tears of those who had witnessed the horrors of war. Mercenaries and soldiers, driven by greed and desperation, had marauded and pillaged, leaving behind a trail of destruction and despair.

In the idyllic village of Haworth, where once lush meadows had thrived, now lay devastation. Cattle and sheep had been stolen or slaughtered, and homes reduced to smouldering ruins. The Rushworth family, however, clung to their ancestral soil, unwavering in the face of adversity. Little did they know that their resilience would intertwine their destiny with the winds of

change, setting them on a course destined for glory or tragedy.

As the embers of conflict dimmed, a new breed of power rose from the ashes. Middle-class landowners, beneficiaries of Cromwell's largesse, ascended the rungs of influence, altering the landscape of privilege and prestige. Among them, Lord Birkhead, once the master of Haworth Manor, had vanished into the shadows. Whispers of his fate drifted through the air like leaves carried on the wind, some claiming he had sought refuge in the embrace of distant lands.

In a land scarred by war and propelled by the winds of change, the tale of a kingdom's fall and the birth of a republic was far from over. In the heart of the chaos, a story of love, loyalty, and unbreakable bonds was about to unfold, weaving together the threads of fate for generations to come.

CHAPTER 1

All Is Not What It Seems

The gentle rustling of cornstalks and the soft caress of a sunlit breeze greeted Tommy as he strolled through the expansive fields of Hall Green. His calloused hands trailed along the emerald beards of corn, a bounty that promised prosperity. The distant echoes of rising prices in York and London had cast a golden glow over their lives, ushering in a glimmer of hope. It was a bountiful year, the promise of a bumper crop that would carry them through the harsh embrace of winter and bring coins for the necessities they couldn't cultivate themselves.

As a yeoman, Tommy had ascended from the ranks of labour, owning his own land, and casting off the chains of rack rents and fines. The weight of his newfound status hung upon him like a finely tailored garment. A VanDyke collar adorned his neck, a mark of a man who belonged to the higher echelons. His tall capotain hat, dark and dignified, crowned him with an air of distinction. His attire, a testament to his toil and determination, spoke volumes to those who might pass judgment.

He stopped for a minute and gazed up at the bright blue sky allowing the sun to warm his face. Now a yeoman, Tommy

owned his own land and didn't pay rack rents¹ or fines² for the lease to his grace.

The cruck house³ where he grew up was gone and replaced with a stone farmhouse. There were windows and a stair led up into the bedrooms. The animals moved to a newly constructed barn outside.

The moors of the Pennine, the pink and purple radiance coloured by a Godly painter. The mounds of blooming heather danced in the breeze and whispered their ancient secrets. Sloping pastures bordered by vivid green, unsymmetrical squares separated the countryside. White sheep, their thick snouts dotted the hills and dales. The bleating and ba-a-a-ing of their lambs echoed through the valley.

As the sun reached its zenith, a silvery beck wound its way through the landscape, a glistening serpentine ribbon that whispered of secrets known only to nature herself. The moors sang their ancient song, a chorus of wrens and warblers striving to court the favour of unseen mates. Tommy halted in his tracks, allowing the woody, mossy fragrance of heather to envelope him in its embrace. He closed his eyes, savouring the scent that spoke of untamed beauty and whispered promises.

He heard Isabel's voice in the distance. Her calls became louder, slowly separating him from his thoughts... no... his dream.

Tommy's eyes fluttered open and he found himself ensconced within the confines of their modest cottage. The warmth of a candle's glow cast a dim light, illuminating Isabel's figure as she

1 Excessive rent obtained by threat of eviction which forced renters to bid more than they could afford to pay.

2 Tenants were expected to purchase their tenancies by payment of lump sums known as fines. Afterwards they paid a small annual rent representing a mere fraction of what the land was worth.

3 House in which the roof is carried on pairs of naturally curved timbers.

sat upon the edge of their bed. Her voice, a gentle reminder of duty and responsibility, tugged him from the embrace of slumber.

‘It’s late and I must start me day or else the kersey⁴ won’t be finished in time.’

Tommy opened his eyes, rubbed them, but then closed them to the candle she lit.

He failed to hold onto the last remnants of his dream. ‘I was havin’ a dream, a nice dream, the corn... the sun... erghh! Now lost.’

Isabel stood but had to stoop because of the low roof in the loft. ‘Husband, dreams start with the first nod and melt with the rooster’s call and you know the only corn ’round here is on the Killsin’s land.’

‘Errgh.’ Frustratingly, Tommy pulled the blanket over his head to delay the inevitable.

‘Come now... up ya get, I’ll wake Will and get him off to the beck for water.’ Isabel put on her wimple⁵ and kirtle⁶.

Their cottage, slightly larger than before accommodated the loom and a window that let in a sliver of daylight, became a hub of activity. The loom stood as a silent testament to their toil, and the small window allowed the promise of a new day to trickle in. A flickering fire beckoned in the hearth, casting dancing shadows that waltzed to a silent rhythm.

Isabel, Tommy, Will and their daughters Morwen and Mirth, spent their days weaving, carding and combing wool. The monotony of their task was tempered by the knowledge that this labour was the thread that stitched together the fabric of their existence. The long-staple fibres yielded to their touch, slowly

4 A coarse woollen cloth that was an important component of the textile trade.

5 Female headdress, formed of a large piece of cloth worn draped around the neck and chin.

6 A one-piece dress or garment worn by women typically over a chemise or smock.

transforming into a tapestry of sustenance and survival.

Some called the wool industry 'The Staple', the fibres and strands of hope. It wasn't because the quality of wool was not what it was.

Cunning broggers, shifty middlemen, kept the best. They bought in bulk and monopolised the industry. They acquired a bad reputation in the west for villainy and crookedness. Often unscrupulous in their dealings with farmers, they demanded far less than what the wool was worth. They borrowed money then bought all the best wool, hiding it away which raised prices. This made it difficult for home spinners and weavers.

The Rushworths struggled. Even so, the family did their best to provide a good kersey for sale with wool they could get, but they knew it wasn't enough to support themselves.

Lack of good wool for the household weaver forced Tommy to buy dirty wool at higher prices. The difference between what they paid and the coin they could get for the kersey at market was pitiful.

Gone was the open green expanse, the rolling fields that once stretched as far as the eye could see, a canvas of arable promise. In their place lay a fragmented tableau, a landscape divided, imprisoned, suffocating under the weight of overgrazing and neglect.

The remnants of a once-thriving community were scattered like fragments of a forgotten dream. The few tenants who clung to their ancestral soil were burdened with the responsibility of managing ten-acre plots, their efforts a testament to both their resilience and the unrelenting demands of survival.

And then there was Hall Green, a seemingly forgotten corner, its worth dismissed as inconsequential. Tommy, in his humility, had assumed that nobody would cast their gaze upon its humble terrain. However, the currents of fate are unpredictable, and he was about to be proven wrong.

The Rushworths, their determination unwavering, laboured tirelessly upon the land they had left. Barley, a grain less noble than its wheat and corn counterparts, became their reluctant companion. Their life-hold, a stronghold of heritage and tradition, remained steadfast, yet the landscape had shifted. The common crop fields that once nourished their hopes and sustenance had been lost to the ever-changing tides of fate.

Small cottages, once witnesses to the laughter of children and the warmth of hearth, stood desolate and abandoned, their time-worn facades a reflection of the community's decline. The air hung heavy with a sense of nostalgia, a mournful dirge for a bygone era, a melancholic song of a once-vibrant past now overshadowed by sorrow.

Due to enclosure, the days of fine wool in the north were gone. All the family could hope for was the sale of long course wool for draperies⁷. At least it got them through, unlike other poor, desolate souls.

The popularity for English wool in Europe had declined and some broggers fell afoul of rich tradesmen because they couldn't pay their debts. Some broggers were out of favour, some found beaten and others locked up. Most had to disappear and earn an income in other dubious ways.

Jacob Wilding, one such brogger, danced dangerously close to the precipice of ruin. His debts, a weight he could no longer bear, forced him into the shadows of the Briggate, a man marked by his own avarice. Unbeknownst to him, his fate would intertwine with that of the Rushworths, a web of destiny woven by the hand of circumstance.

7 Traditional English woollen cloth often called the 'old draperies' which was mostly woven into clothing for the poor.

The tradesmen of the Company⁸ lent Wilding money to buy wool, but now he couldn't pay it back. He went into hiding in Leeds.

The Company were a group of rich trading families who held power in Parliament. It was they who rose to the forefront and now controlled trade in and out of England. Publicly, the Company personified respectability and class; however, there was a more sinister side. They made their fortune exporting wool, cloth and... opium grown in India and sold to China for considerable profit. These landed families originally made broad cloth⁹. Their empires grew they turned to exporting cloth out of Selby and Hull. They began to outdo the merchants of London and Hull and became the most powerful in England.

Mr Wilding took a large loan from the Company to buy wool from shepherds outside Leeds. He made a good living until brogging became outlawed. Following an act of parliament, licences were restricted to approved, honest merchants. Jacob Wilding was not one of them.

For broggers, a fine twice the value of their wool was a deterrent. Wilding was in strife. He didn't own a licence so couldn't sell it. He also couldn't pay off his loan, which carried an interest rate of two hundred percent. The Rushworth's ten acres of land was harsh and rocky but had good, lush green feed for their small herd of sheep. The four acres of barley allowed them to make bread when harvested. The vegetable garden allowed fresh potatoes and onions in spring and summer if they didn't rot from the damp.

8 A prosperous group of men with immense political power. They controlled import and export out of England. They were also in the Opium trade and disguised their more dubious sources of income.

9 Heavily milled woollen cloth shrunk so individual fibres of wool bound together in a felting process. Hard wearing and capable, usually used for officers' uniforms and higher ranked citizens.

Groggily, Tommy dressed and climbed down the old, crooked, rickety ladder which led from the loft. He could hear Isabel trying to raise Will as the rooster welcomed the start of a new day. He opened the shutters. It was dark except for the candlelight coming from the Killsin's two-story house, which sat on a rise a quarter of a mile away.

He peered at the unripened wheat swaying in the moonlight and couldn't help but feel jealous of his crop. *It doesn't seem right, all that land for one man.*

Tommy yawned and examined the sky which was ablaze with a billion stars and stretched as far as the eye could see. He coughed the night-time phlegm from his throat and spat it through the opening. Taking a deep cold breath in and out he watched it curl, circle then vanish into the darkness.

Tommy's off white, long neck shirt was open to midway down his chest. His indigo, buttoned tunic revealed curled chest hairs and worn leathery skin. His breeches were baggy and his woollen stockings loose around his lower leg. His cut-out latchet shoes had strips of leather wrapped around the foot poking through holes in the upper part of the shoe. A man of medium height, his face weathered by the northern elements. He had thick dark brown eyebrows, deep-set eyes, a chiselled chin and a previously broken nose from the 'ball' he played as a young man. His cheeks were reddened by the constant wind blowing across the moors. His hands strong, rough and scarred from the dry wall he was building for his grace.

Isabel climbed down the ladder trying not to step on her kirtle. Will, their eldest followed. When he got to the bottom he turned and tried to shake away the grogginess.

Isabel put her hands on her hips and shook her head in frustration. 'Tommy, the children will get a chill with the shutter open.

Goodness me, close it before their humours¹⁰ get out a' sorts.'

Isabel hurried toward the fire. She bent down and stoked it, placing a small piece of dried peat on the embers and blew to raise the flame.

'Wife, ya worry too much.' He closed the shutter to the early morning and shuffled toward the hearth. There he squatted warming his hands on the growing flame.

Isabel's heart swelled with maternal pride as she cast a fond glance at her son, his towering stature for his age a testament to their family's heritage. 'He's tall for his age, is our Will,' she proclaimed, her voice a soft murmur of pride.

Will's groans and yawns echoed through the cottage as he struggled to shake off the remnants of sleep. His doublet, now too snug for his growing frame, clung to his shoulders, the fabric bearing witness to his recent growth spurt. Only the two ties at the bottom managed to unite the garment in front, a testament to the rapid passage of time.

Isabel ambled back over to the stairs, peeked up and called out, 'Morwen, Mirth, up ya get now my loves, there's work to be done.'

'I feel heartbroken, Tommy. Will and the girls must grow up in this world, what of their future?' Isabel whispered.

Tommy heated the combs in the fire on a stone slab. 'He'll make do just like I did, and me da, and his da before 'im.'

'Oh Tommy, I worry about them so much!' Isabel shook her head.

'The moors are in his blood and no matter what happens nobody'll ever take it away from him. He'll be right, he's a Rushworth and he'll do what we've always done, survive!'

10 Four bodily substances blood (sanguine), yellow bile (choleric), black bile (melancholic) and phlegm (phlegmatic) meant sickness or disease.

Tommy inserted the combs¹¹ into the fire to heat so they slid through the oily wool much easier. Having the fire on all day, especially in summer, made the one-room cottage unbearably hot and humid. The ceiling rained and the walls ran with the humidity but it was better than the alternative.

Will grumbled, he had a petulant expression; he wasn't a morning person. He walked over to the water bucket sitting on the floor and poured some into the ceramic bowl. He splashed his face, he wiped the night's gritty sleep from his eyes.

Will had a rugged and weather-beaten appearance. His sun-kissed, wind-bitten skin bore the marks of countless hours spent toiling under the open sky. His blonde hair had a sun-bleached wheat colour. His locks were unruly and unkempt, and fell in shaggy waves.

His attire was simple, he wore a coarse tunic and breeches made from wool and a heavy, weather-resistant cloak.

His lean and muscular frame spoke of a life of hard labour, where he tended to sheep and worked the land with his father and uncle.

Despite the physical challenges and simplicity of his existence, his eyes held a spark of resilience and youthful hope. The moors were his home, and he possessed an intimate knowledge of the land, its ever-changing seasons, and the nuances of its flora and fauna.

Dreams and aspirations danced in his heart, even amidst the daily grind. He longed for a better future, and harboured a desire for adventure beyond the moors, fuelled by the timeless spirit of youth. Picking up the other water bucket, he grabbed his hat hanging on a nail near the door. The door creaked as he opened it. Stepping out

11 It was an arduous and dangerous occupation, for the fire was rarely extinguished, windows were rarely opened and fumes caused illness and death.

into the morning's light sky, his steamy breath billowed before him.

Will traipsed around the side of the cottage and let their twelve sheep out of the keep¹². The sheep had been shorn and the wool already woven and sold. The lambs had been shorn with stud combs¹³ for protection from the cold autumn nights. The sheep relished the freedom from the keep and darted off in the same direction. The lambs followed in haste with a bounce and kick of their hind legs.

Will headed east toward the beck¹⁴. Glimpsing at the first rays of sun peeking over the horizon, he listened to the dawn chorus; the blackbirds, robins and wrens sung their morning song. The dark silhouette of the kingfisher flashed past on its way to the beck.

What is my future? he thought as he strolled along, thinking about his mother and father's whispers. *Me parents aren't getting any younger. I need to do more. I'll visit the manor, see if I can get work at their new mill.*

He crossed Sun Street then walked down the slope. Reaching his favourite water collection point at the beck, he turned and paused to see his trail of steps in the dew. He peered north to the manor.

As the day unfurled its possibilities, the manor beckoned, its secrets and promises intertwined with the threads of his destiny. He glanced towards it, a beacon of wealth and intrigue that loomed on the horizon, its allure tinged with a hint of apprehension.

Will had heard the stories, mostly bad, and knew his mother wouldn't like him working there. The grand building was lit up on both floors, the chimney chugging grey smoke from preparations

12 A square wattle fence used to keep sheep in out of the weather and from marauding carnivores at night.

13 Combs which leave more wool on the animal in colder months, giving greater protection.

14 A small river.

for the first meal of the day. The thought of it brought pangs of hunger, so he quickly collected water and headed home.

Isabel poured water from the jug into the cauldron. She stirred the unripe barley and silverweed roots, 'Tommy, we 'ave little grain left. I need to go to the village and sell something to tide us over.'

Tommy grumbled, 'Aye, but it's so expensive! The engrossers¹⁵ took theirs and the rains took the rest. Bad weather, higher taxes, summer rain, drought and frost.'

How are we to get on? Isabel asked herself desperately.

Tommy stared at her and mumbled, 'Things were better under the king.'

Isabel's eyes grew wide with fear. 'Tommy, please!'

Isabel wasn't used to seeing Tommy in this type of mood, but she knew what he'd been through in the war. The memory of almost losing him was like a shadow on her heart¹⁶.

'Usband, you'll end up hanging from the Tree¹⁷ and the rest of us will end up beggin' in the street.'

'Well, what do ya expect, every time I go up ta village, they've put their grain prices up.'

Isabel sighed. 'Aye, I hear ya. Seems poor folk are the only ones livin' the dearth¹⁸.' She ladled pottage¹⁹ into wooden bowls and placed them onto the table.

The familial bond between Isabel and Tommy stood firm, a bastion of support in a world fraught with uncertainty. 'We must

15 One who takes or gets control of grain before it goes to market, a monopoliser. One who controls supply and demand.

16 Tommy was a veteran of the English Civil War described in my second novel 'Red Winter Journey'.

17 York 'Tyburn Tree' was a triangular set of wooden gallows where criminals were hanged to death.

18 A situation where food is in short supply.

19 A staple of the poor's diet made with available ingredients. It was typically boiled for several hours until the entire mixture took on a homogeneous texture and flavour.

forge ahead, Isabel. For our children, for our family, we must weather this storm and find a way to thrive.'

Tommy slurped some of the watery stew, 'Even with the little coin we 'ave, victuals are scarce.'

'Beggars grow in their number and those who don't give do too. Even poor relief is failing in the Parish,' claimed Isabel.

'Milton Killsin's got the job of handing out poor relief among the Parish,' Tommy explained.

'Can't blame 'im, Tommy, there's only so much coin ta go 'round.'

'Aye, and I know where it's goin' ta... buyin' more bloody sheep! His herd has grown threefold since he got 'ere.'

Isabel gazed at Tommy sternly, 'Husband you 'ave no proof!'

Tommy stood and pointed toward the Killsin's farmhouse, his eyes squinted with rage, 'Two storeys, four windows, come now, how can they afford it in these times?'

Isabel raised her hand to calm him. 'Husband, he comes from money in Halifax, Mrs Killsin told me. Has the backin' of Jasper Calamy who he fought with in the war²⁰.'

Tommy's face grew red with frustration and anger, 'Aye, well I fought in the war and what did it get me? Nothin' but a head full a' bad dreams.'

Isabel stepped closer and put her arms around his neck affectionately, 'Husband, you were very brave and I thank God you returned to us.'

Tommy put his arms around her. 'Wife tis not right! How are we ta get on?'

Isabel always tried to look on the brighter side. *I don't know how or when but things will get better. They 'ave to. Dear God they 'ave to. Every night she prayed.*

20 The English Civil War was a series of civil wars and political machinations between Parliamentarians and Royalists.

The Puritan Milton Killsin leased land from Jasper Calamy at a low price in return for his services in the war. It was enclosed to keep Tommy's sheep from it and what was once common land was now gone.

Milton Killsin was out of favour with the people in the parish because he bought sheep at a pittance from families who were turned off for not paying rack rents²¹. He also took their lands and had amassed forty acres.

The Rushworths didn't know it at the time, but now he wanted theirs and would do anything to get it. He didn't want this lowly sort living next to him.

After the war, parliamentary backed Puritanism caused huge political and religious divides encouraging suspicion and tension in villages and towns throughout Yorkshire. The 'witch panic' was the result and accusation and fear grew widespread.

Isabel was fearful the same tension and suspicions would reach Haworth. Her fears would soon be realised.

Isabel stood closer and whispered so the girls couldn't hear, 'All this darkness, Mrs Killsin says it's the wrath of God. Only after fasting and repentance will the famine and pestilence end. She says its devilry!'

Tommy listened then smiled. 'All this talk of devils, demons and witches, it's Cromwell scarin' people to go to church. I don't believe any of it.'

Isabel stared into space nervously. 'Some say, the Devil is on Earth collecting souls ready for the end of the world. Many speak of witches and their wicked ways turnin' poor souls and leavin' their mark.'

Tommy sighed. 'Load of nonsense if you ask me.'

21 Excessive rent is obtained by threat of eviction which forced renters to bid more than they could afford to pay.

Isabel frowned. 'Tommy!'

'Well, what do ya expect? It's Killsin, he starts all the rumours about witches and demons and his wife's no better.'

'Tommy! Don't you dare speak about Mrs Killsin, she's a kind soul.'

'Mrs Killsin says they are hangin' 'em down south. Witchfinders²², they go from village to village finding women who've made a covenant with the Devil. Nineteen convicted in Chelmsford, hanged 'em all, they did.'

'So, that's where ya been hearin' all these fanciful stories, Mrs Killsin? I wouldn't be believing everything you hear from her.' Tommy shook his head.

Isabel glared at him. 'Quiet now, she's a blessin', gives me vegetables from her garden and flour, well when her husband isn't about.'

She frowned. 'He blames her fer them not 'avin' children. She's lived with guilt for twenty years. He treats her so poorly.'

The girls were giggling upstairs, Isabel lowered her voice. 'Mrs Killsin said the witchfinders inspect a person fer the Devil's mark.'

'Witches, witchfinders? Are you seriously worried?'

'Tommy, Mrs Killsin is a kind soul and if she believes it, then I do too.'

'A load a' bloody rot if you ask me.'

'She told me, they bring in a witch pricker²³ who watches fer blood and if there isn't any, they're branded a witch.'

'Witch pricker?' Tommy smiled.

Isabel frowned. 'Don't laugh Tommy, poor women get dunked in water to see if they float. If they come up, God's turned his

22 Chelmsford was also the site of many witch trials and executions during the Matthew Hopkins witch-hunt.

23 In the 17th century, common belief held that a witch could be discovered through the process of pricking their skin.

back on 'em, they're branded a witch and put to the hangin'... or worse!' *What a horrible way to go.*

Tommy wasn't a believer. He stood confidently and gently put his arm around Isabel's shoulders. 'Don't worry, luv, there are more things between heaven and earth that could do more harm to common folk than witches, devils and demons. The less said about it the better.'

Morwen and Mirth started to climb down the ladder.

'Shooosh, 'usband, all this talk about devils and witches will scare the girls.'

Tommy lowered his voice, 'The dearth will kill more than your witchfinders you mark me words.'

'Shuuush!'

'John Pigshells told me those turned off their land by Calamy, are travellin' to Leeds fer work. Poor bastards will be ripe pickin's fer highwaymen and footpads²⁴.'

'I've heard they're mostly former Royalist soldiers turned from their lands by Cromwell's generals. They don't rob the poor and homeless, just the new rich,' stated Isabel confidently.

Tommy smiled at her forthrightness and replied cheekily, 'And wife, what would a woman know of such things²⁵?'

Isabel rolled her eyes. 'I hear and know as much as you, 'usband!'

'Mornin', Ma, mornin', Da.' The girls gave their parents a peck on the cheek, celebrating the birth of another day.

Tommy smiled and winked at Isabel. 'Girls, the day is gone, you may as well go back up and climb back under yer blanket the sun is settin'.'

Morwen and Mirth laughed. 'Tis not, Da, it's risin' silly!'

24 Robber or thief specialising in pedestrian victims.

25 At this time, men had authority over women instructing them to remain silent.

They both giggled.

Thomas opened the door wider. 'And how do ya know girls?'

Morwen strode over. 'Cause the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, hahaha! Yer tryin' ta trick us.'

Isabel shuffled over and handed them both a small basket, 'Aye, well yer da's right, if you'd slept any longer, you would 'ave missed the day.'

Mirth whined, 'Oh, Ma, but it's sooo early! I should still be under me blanket.'

'Stop whining, now go on you two, off with ya. Go collect the eggs.'

Tommy sat down at the loom; his smile changed to a frown. 'Some 'ave gone to the city. Others 'ave returned tellin' tales of people starvin' on the side of the road. Whole families with neither bread nor seed or coin to buy either.'

Isabel sighed. 'I hope John and Robert are okay, it's been so long.'

'Time will tell, they're good lads probably workin' in a mill somewhere. Just wish they'd send word,' replied Tommy.

John and Robert, William's sons, went to the city. They'd been gone two years and nobody heard from them. Some thought the worst.

Isabel sensed Tommy's frustration, 'Mrs Killsin told me Milton bought sheep from down the road. Another family turned off.'

Tommy threw the weft threads across the warp threads.

'Rap! Trap! Rap!' 'Rap! Trap! Rap!'

He paused and rested his forearms on the breast beam. 'Yea, well if they keep turning crop to pasture, there'll be no grain fer anybody!'

Jasper Calamy was awarded the common land by Parliament. Most of his tenants were gone. The only ones he couldn't get rid of were the plots owned by freeholders. He also couldn't evict

life-holders like the Rushworths unless there was reason.

Gone was the open green expanse of arable open fields. The land was divided, imprisoned, suffocating from over grazing.

The few tenants who remained were responsible for ten-acre lots. As for Hall Green²⁶, it wasn't arable like on the other side of the beck. Tommy assumed nobody would be interested in it. He was wrong.

The Rushworths made do with what they tried to grow mostly barley which was cheaper than wheat and corn. They held their life-hold; yet, lost access to common crop fields²⁷.

Small cottages once graced the countryside but were now abandoned and desolate. It was a sad old, sad old place.

'Rap! Trap! Rap!' 'Rap! Trap! Rap!'

'Ya know, wife, they be weavin' in Keighley, lots of men and women weavin' and cardin' wool under the same roof. I hear Calamy's doin' the same over at the manor.'

Isabel sat down at the spinning wheel. 'Suppose ya gonna want ta rush right off and join 'em, husband.'

'Rap! Trap! Rap!'

'Me, nooooo!'

'Tommy 'ave you 'eard how they're treated in those places, no sunlight, workin' from before dawn till dark? Ya get a whippin' if ya so much as raise your eyes from the wheel of the loom. I'd rather be at home, thank ya muchly.'

'Rap! Trap! Rap!' 'Rap! Trap! Rap!'

Tommy's hands moved with a steady determination, his voice a reflection of his steadfast commitment. 'Aye, the coin we earn at

26 An area very close to Haworth, Yorkshire where my great-grandfather x10, Thomas Rushworth, lived with his family in 1590. He features in my first novel 'Skulduggery' published by Shawline Publishing.

27 Refers to the appropriation of common land enclosing it and by doing so depriving commoners of their rights of access and privilege.

market may not be much, but at least we're together.'

'Rap! Trap! Rap!' 'Rap! Trap! Rap!'

'THE ONLY ONES LIVIN' WELL ARE THE BROGGERS AND ENGROSSERS,' Isabel yelled.

'Rap! Trap! Rap!' 'Rap! Trap! Rap!'

'John Pigshells told me broggers are havin' problems paying back loans. Somethin' about the state of the pound and the quality of the cloth²⁸.

'Rap! Trap! Rap!'

'Europeans aren't buyin' as much wool. Broggers get stuck with it. If they can't sell it they can't pay back their loans. They deserve everything they get, thievin' bastards!

'Maybe William will do better at the market,' replied Isabel as she slowly spun the wheel.

In Halifax, a new middle class arose, merchants and craftsmen were supporters of Cromwell's government. Their commercial power was boosted and ownership of property was taken from previous noble landowners by order of Cromwell and his eleven generals²⁹.

Lord Birkhead was forced out of Haworth Manor by order of Colonel Robert Lilburne³⁰. Jasper Calamy was anointed with administrative power over Keighley, a mantle he embraced with fervour.

Calamy was a Puritan scholar and Justice of the Peace. He was commanded to uphold the orders of Cromwell, in Keighley and for the people's acceptance of strict Puritan ways.

28 After enclosure, the quality of the wool, in Yorkshire became worse and Europeans sought fine wool.

29 The Rule of the Major-Generals was a period of direct military government. England and Wales were divided into eleven regions, each governed by a major-general who answered to Cromwell..

30 Supported Oliver Cromwell during first years of the Protectorate. In 1654 he was appointed Governor of York.

Things changed since the departure of the king. The Kings Arms³¹ lost its usual merriment and the usual past times and sports were gone.

Oliver Cromwell was the protector of England. A Puritan, a highly religious man who believed the future of England rested in his hands. He thought he alone was responsible for ensuring the Godliness of its citizens. This was a doctrine which was upheld and any who didn't follow the ways were punished.

There was no longer rat baiting³² or dog fighting and frivolous pastimes were banned. Dancing and play on a Sunday was frowned upon and festivals like Christmas were cancelled. Anybody found not conforming to the strict religious ways were publicly whipped or placed in the pillory³³.

The Maypole³⁴ was removed from the village square and villagers were presented at court leet³⁵, by Milton Killsin, for non-payment of the taxes and tithe³⁶ even when they were destitute. Times were tough.

In the village, the old vicar was charged for not reading set Puritan prayers and for non-Puritan irregularities. The churchwardens were cited for nonconformity and a lack of respect to Puritan ways. They were all presented at the court leet and fled soon afterwards.

As the village grappled with the shadows of change, the figure

31 The Kings Arms in Haworth dates to the 17th Century. It was used as the Manor Courthouse until 1870. The cellars were used by the village undertaker as a mortuary and the rear of the Inn was a slaughterhouse.

32 A blood sport that involves releasing captured rats in an enclosed space with spectators betting on how long a dog, usually a terrier, takes to kill the rats.

33 A wooden framework with holes for the head and hands, in which offenders were formerly imprisoned and exposed to public abuse.

34 A tall wooden pole erected as a part of various English folk festivals, around which a maypole dance often takes place.

35 A historical court baron (a type of manorial court) of England.

36 One tenth of annual produce or earnings, formerly taken as a tax for the support of the Church and clergy.

of Milton Killsin emerged as both enforcer and arbiter of the new order. A man of cunning and ambition, he rode the currents of power, driven by a relentless desire to secure his own fortune. With a two-story farmhouse and plots of land, he wielded his authority, his gaze fixated upon the Rushworths' domain.

The new churchwarden, Milton Killsin, approached Jasper Calamy and requested a new Puritan clergy for Saint Michael's.

Milton Killsin and his wife moved to the village from Halifax to build their fortune. Killsin came from a family of rich cloth merchants who lost their fortune during the war. Anything of value was inherited by his older brother Oliver, much to Milton's annoyance.

Milton Killsin was responsible for ensuring all who lived in the village and surrounds abided by Puritan ways. He was responsible for collecting the hearth tax³⁷ and distributing relief to the poor.

Milton rode his horse carriage around on a Sunday watching for those who broke the laws of the Sabbath. Any found to be contravening the will of the church were presented at the court leet.

In return, Jasper Calamy provided him with a two-story farmhouse and a thirty-acre plot at Hall Green. He also promised him more land as it became available.

Milton Killsin was a rather short, pompous, plump little man with beady eyes and several chins. His wispy, fine hair curled to his shoulders. His clothes were always pressed and his wife was under strict instructions to ensure his Vandyke collar and cuffs were bright white.

Milton tended to walk with his chin up trying to make himself seem taller.

When he wasn't tending to his wheat or sheep, then he was

37 A hearth tax was a property tax in the early modern period in England. Levied on each hearth, thus by proxy on wealth. It was calculated based on the number of hearths or fireplaces.

at church. When he wasn't at church he was watching, all the time watching. Much of the time standing outside his house motionless, just scrutinising the Rushworth's cottage, and planning what to do with their land.

Milton was friendless and his only family was his wife and his brother's family. He rarely visited them and rarely spoke to locals unless he presented at court leet. It was here where he felt superior and acted like he was still a clerk in the Parliamentary army.

Milton Killsin wasn't liked in the village and some speculated it was only a matter of time before he got his just deserts.

If he heard Milton's name, John Pigshells would squint his eyes and clench his fist, 'FUCKIN' CUMBERWOLD³⁸! I know what he deserves, and I'll be the one to give it to 'im one day, mark me words!'

John was never backwards in coming forwards and spoke his mind whenever and wherever he chose. Most often this was the reason why he ended up in the pillory, but more often for fighting, cheating at cards or being with women of questionable character. He knew his three bastard children around Keighley.

Isabel tried her best to get on Milton's good side and would often wave if she saw either him or his wife outside.

Mrs Killsin often smiled and waved back. Milton would order her to put her hand down³⁹.

If he noticed Isabel waving, he'd ignore her and turn away.

My lambs and ewes won't make it through winter and Calamy's no help. I'll 'ave to take care of this myself. Milton spent a good part of the day thinking about this conundrum.

Often Isabel would see him peering at her from behind a lace

38 A useless person.

39 At the time, women were considered second class citizens and were either held to be completely deceitful, sexual, innocent or incompetent. Their needs always were an afterthought.

curtain upstairs. He gave her the creeps.

Isabel liked Mrs Killsin. She and her daughters would often call out and go up to the dry bap wall which divided their land. She knew the latest news from Halifax, offered vegetables from her garden and sweets to share. Isabel knew she was a kind-hearted soul and thought no ill of her.

Mrs Killsin's hair was tied in a bun underneath her wimple. Her kind face appeared older than her years. She was quite portly but was always smiling and this was the reason people in the village liked her.

Both her and Milton's family were traders and they knew each other for years in Halifax. They played together as children and it was only fitting she and Milton married when they become of age.

On Sunday after Church, Milton did not socialise with other members of the congregation. He would order Mrs Killsin to get into their small carriage and leave without as much as a God bless or farewell. He knew they despised him for his many presentments⁴⁰ to court leet.

In the shadow of hardship, the Rushworths clung to their unity, their resilience a testament to the enduring power of love and family. As the sun journeyed across the sky, casting its golden glow upon the landscape, the Rushworths continued their unyielding march, propelled by a shared conviction that no matter the trials they faced, their spirit would endure.

40 An opportunity for any citizen or group of citizens to make representations (called presentments) to the local manor courts. The presentments were about matters of local concern.